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<u>Amendments to the Claims:</u>

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (currently amended) A <u>computer-implemented</u> method for connecting no more than a plurality of customers using a domain accessible through a communications network, each of said plurality having a billing address and an account associated with a service provider, said service provider communicatively linked to said domain, said method comprising:

notifying said each of said plurality about said domain by including information in a billing statement for said each of said plurality;

providing said each of said plurality with access to said domain;

providing said each of said plurality with a customer profile questionnaire;

receiving responses to said questionnaire from at least a portion of said plurality of customers;

. receiving an inquiry about a community of interest (COI) from one customer in said portion;

determining existence of said COI with which other customers in said portion are associated;

sending <u>by operation of said computer</u> a generated status message to <u>only</u> said other customers, if said COI exists, as confirmation that said one customer has joined said COI; and

allowing at least a subset of said portion of said plurality of customers giving common answers to said questionnaire, to communicate with each other using said domain while not

disclosing true identity of each customer of said subset to others of said plurality, said subset

comprising said one customer and said other customers.

2.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said notifying further includes

mailing said billing statement to each of said plurality.

3.   (original) The method of claim 2 wherein said notifying further includes providing said

plurality with a universal resource locator (URL), said URL for allowing said plurality access to

said domain.

4.   (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said access means includes a server associated

with a URL and made available to said plurality of customers, said server facilitating access to

said domain by said plurality.

5.   (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said addresses are used in establishing said

subset of said plurality.

6.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said domain is only accessible to

those of said plurality sharing a common interest.

7.   (original) The method of claim 6 wherein said providing further requires that said each of

said plurality enter a password to gain access to said domain.

8.   (canceled)

9.   (currently amended) A system for allowing no more than a plurality of customers to

communicate over a network, said system comprising:

        a service provider having an account with each of said plurality;

        a domain associated with said service provider;

        billing means controlled by said service provider for invoicing each said account;

        notification means associated with said billing means for informing said each of said

plurality about said domain and for providing said each of said plurality with a customer profile

questionnaire;

        means for receiving responses to said questionnaire from at least a portion of said

plurality and for allowing at least a subset of said portion of said plurality giving common

answers to said questionnaire to communicate with each other using said domain, wherein said

receiving and allowing means includes means for receiving an inquiry about a community of

interest (COI) from one customer of said subset, means for determining existence of said COI

with other customers of said subset belonging to said COI, and means for sending a generated

status message to only said other customers as confirmation that said one customer has joined

said COI; and

        a server associated with said domain for allowing said each of said subset to access said

domain upon authentication.

10.   (previously presented) The system of claim 9 wherein said server further comprises:

authentication means for allowing each of said one customer and said other customers of

said subset to establish its respective identity; and

associating means for mapping each said respective identity to an alias randomly-

generated and chosen by said server and associated with its respective customer of said subset,

said alias being made available to all other customers of said subset having access to said

domain, said alias further concealing true identity of said respective customer of said subset;

storage means for archiving said domain and information about said one customer of said

subset and said other customers of said subset having access to said domain; and

interaction means for allowing said other customers of said subset having access to said

domain to communicate with each other and with said one customer of said subset using their

respective aliases.

11.   (currently amended) A computer-readable medium containing a plurality of instructions

that, when executed by at least one processor, causes said at least one processor to perform a

method for inter-connecting through a communications network no more than a plurality of

customers who are associated with a service provider, said method comprising:

providing each of said plurality of customers with a customer profile questionnaire;

receiving responses to said questionnaire from at least a portion of said plurality of

customers;

allowing a subset of said portion of said plurality of customers giving common answers

to said questionnaire to have access to a domain associated with said service provider;

accepting data from at least one of said subset of said portion of said plurality of

customers,

verifying a true identity of said at least one of said subset of said portion of said plurality of customers based upon at least a portion of said data;

mapping said true identity to an alias associated with said at least one of said subset of said portion of said plurality of customers; and

allowing others of said subset of said portion of said plurality of customers with access to said domain to have access only to said alias while keeping said true identity in confidence;

wherein said at least one customer of said subset inquires about a community of interest (COI), said COI is determined to exist with certain customers of said subset belonging to said COI, and a status message is generated and sent to only said certain customers as confirmation that said at least one inquiring customer has joined said COI.

12.   (original) The method of claim 11 further comprising:

notifying said plurality of customers about said domain by including information in a billing statement associated with said service provider.

13.   (original) The method of claim 11 further including storing said domain and information about those of said plurality of customers having access to said domain.

14.   (previously presented) The method of claim 11 wherein said allowing said domain access and said allowing said alias access include a server coupled to said communications network.

15.   (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said at least one of said plurality of customers uses a web browser to access said domain.

16.   (currently amended) A data display for displaying information about a domain to a customer associated with a service provider, said customer having been notified about an address associated with said domain by said service provider by way of a billing statement, said domain being made available to said customer for facilitating communication with persons having a common interest with said customer, said data display comprising:

a logon field for receiving input data from said customer, said input data for establishing an identity of said customer;

an alias field for displaying an alias associated with said customer, said alias further being made available to persons having access to said domain and sharing said common interest with said customer; and

a selection field for allowing said customer to choose a topic of interest, said topic of interest being identified by said customer responding to questions in a customer profile questionnaire presented by said service provider to said customer on said data display and being linked to at least a subset of said persons sharing said common interest with said customer, said selection field including a new group button for (a) creating a new group of persons including said customer and a further subset of said subset of persons, all of whom are interested in an un-displayed topic of interest and (b) allowing a generated status message to be sent to only said ~~customer~~ further subset of said subset of said persons as confirmation that said customer has successfully created said un-displayed topic of interest and has joined said new group.

17.   (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for enabling each customer in a plurality of customers of a service provider to determine if other customers in said plurality have one or more interests in common with said each customer and to anonymously communicate

over a network with certain of said other customers having said interests in common, said

method comprising:

notifying said each customer by way of its respective billing statement from said service

provider about a common domain in said network over which anonymous communication may

take place and providing said each customer with a customer profile questionnaire;

receiving responses to said questionnaire from at least a portion of said plurality of

customers;

providing a subset of said portion of said plurality of customers giving common answers

to said questionnaire with access to said domain and giving each in said subset access to

information about said interests of said other customers in said subset to permit said anonymous

communication between said each customer in said subset and said other customers in said

subset, said anonymous communication resulting from aliases each generated randomly by a

server for, respectively, a different one of said subset of customers, whereby said each customer

in said subset knows said aliases and not true identities of said other customers in said subset;

permitting each in said subset to inquire about a respective community of interest (COI);

determining existence or non-existence of said COI;

sending, by operation of said computer, if said COI exists, a generated status message

only to others of said subset who belong to said COI as confirmation that said inquiring customer

has joined said COI; and

sending, by operation of said computer, if said COI does not exist, a different generated

status message to said inquiring customer signifying that said inquiring customer has

successfully joined a new COI.

18.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

sending a generated status message to said one customer, if said COI does not exist, as

confirmation that said customer has successfully joined a new COI.